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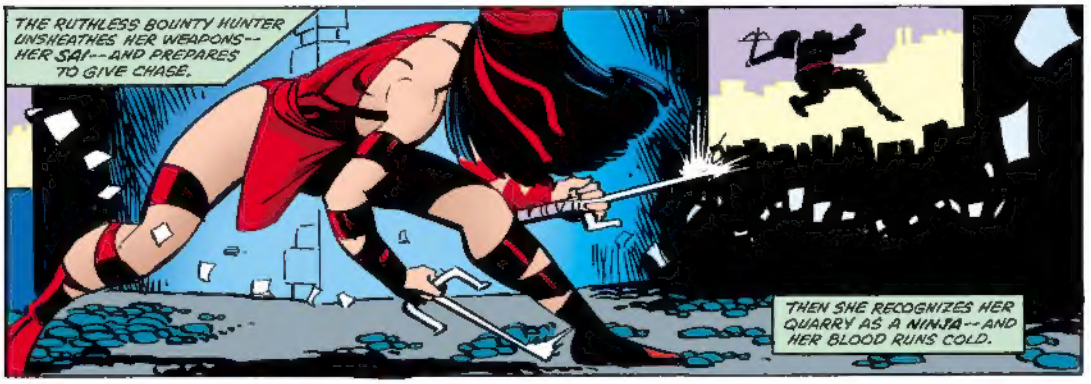
DAREDEVIL®

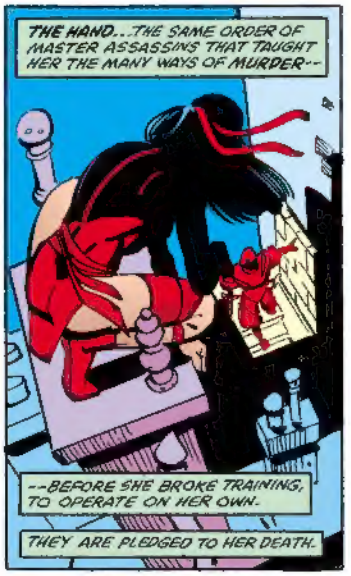
...ELEKTRA & THE GLADIATOR...

...FIGHTING AN ARMY OF ASSASSINS!

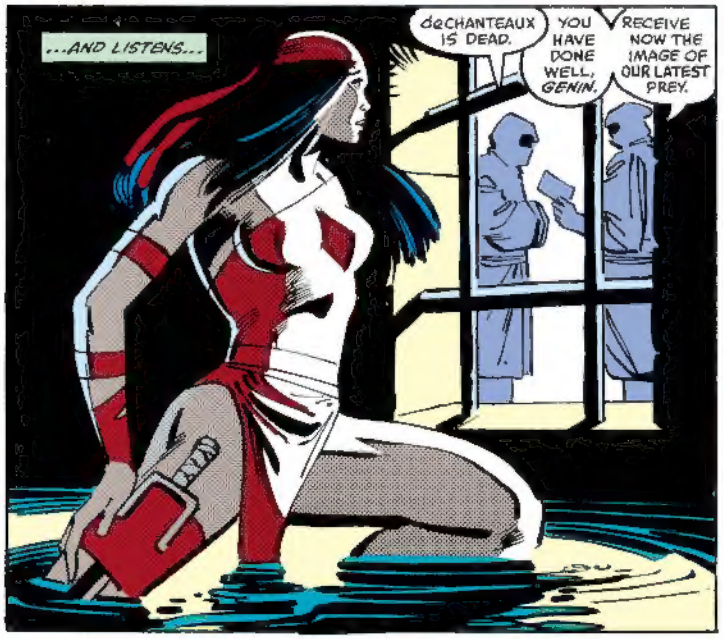
Stan Lee PRESENTS: DAREDEVIL, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!...
PROLOGUE
THUNK
ALIVE, ALPHONSE deCHANTEAUX WAS WORTH A FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLAR BOUNTY.
WHOEVER KILLED HIM MUST NOW FACE ELEKTRA.


THE RUTHLESS BOUNTY HUNTER UNSHEATHES HER WEAPONS--HER SAI--AND PREPARES TO GIVE CHASE.
THEN SHE RECOGNIZES HER QUARRY AS A NINJA--AND HER BLOOD RUNS COLD.

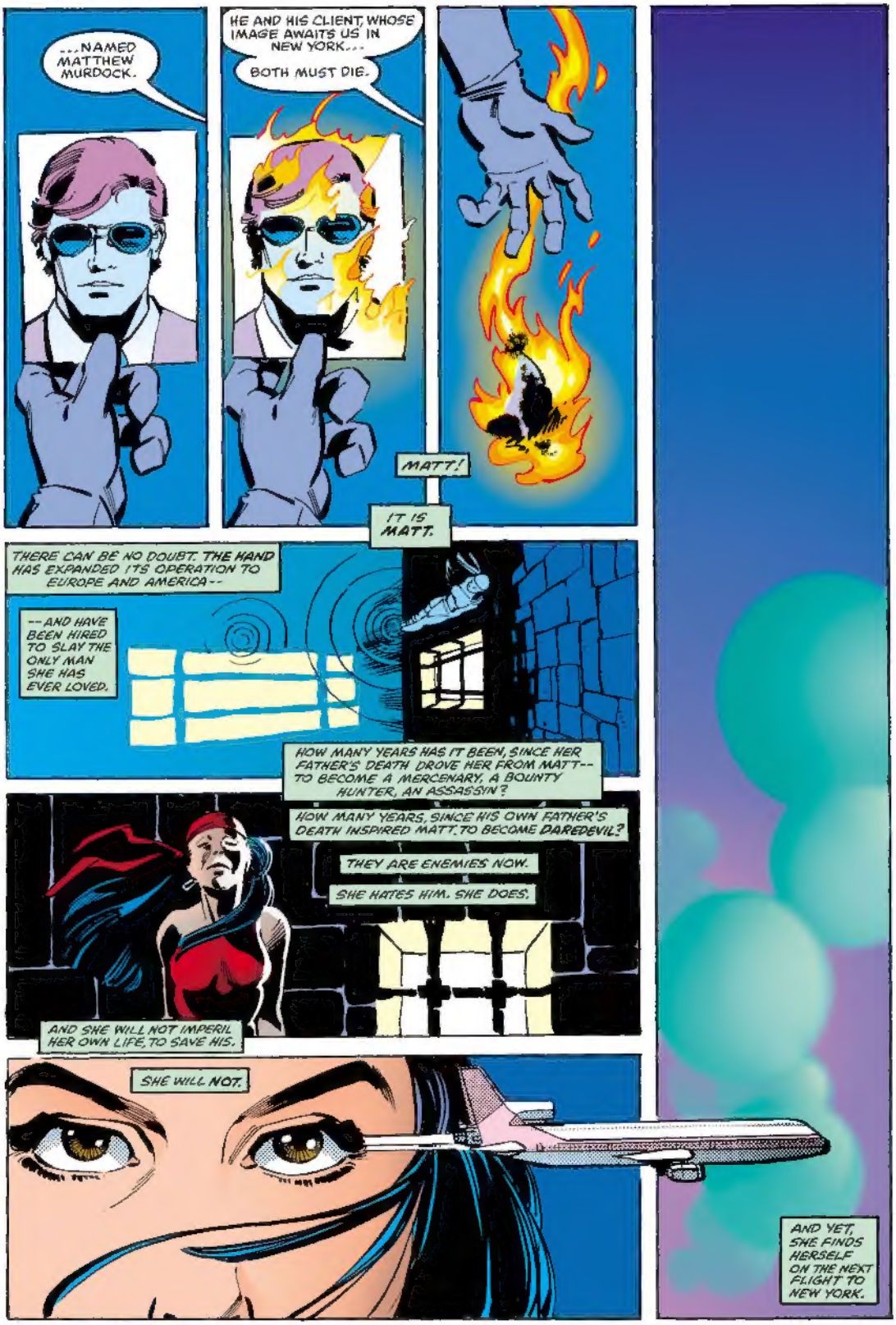
A CLOSER LOOK CONFIRMS HER SUSPICION. HE IS ONE OF THE HAND.


THE HAND...THE SAME ORDER OF MASTER ASSASSINS THAT TAUGHT HER THE MANY WAYS OF MURDER--
--BEFORE SHE BROKE TRAINING, TO OPERATE ON HER OWN.
THEY ARE PLEDGED TO HER DEATH.

BUT WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE, IN PARIS, THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM THEIR TERRITORY?
SHE SHOULD NOT WONDER. SHE SHOULD TURN AND RUN. SHE SHOULD FLEE THIS CITY, AND NEVER RETURN.
YET, SHE FOLLOWS...

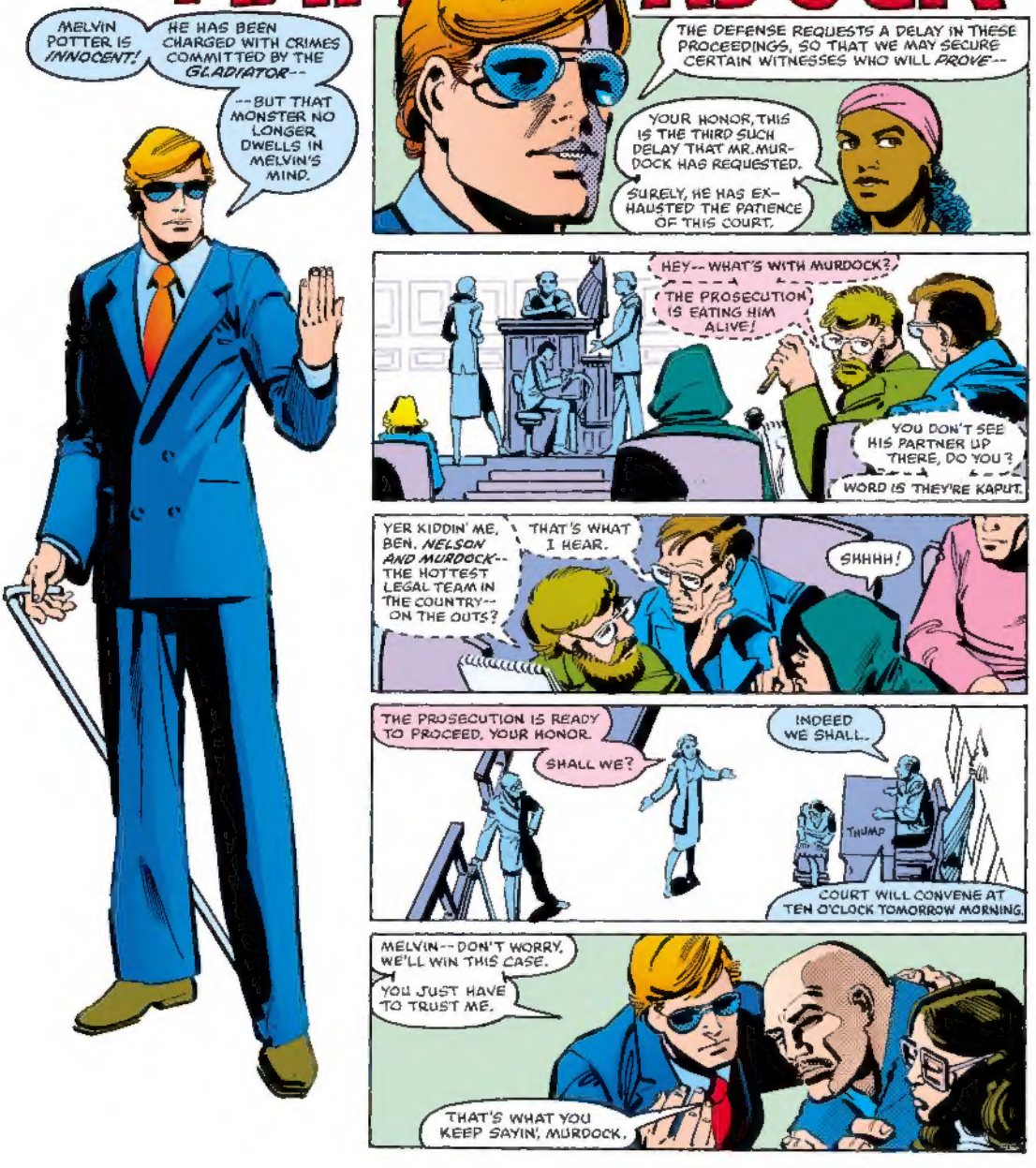

...AND LISTENS...
dæCHANTEAUX IS DEAD.
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, GENIN.
RECEIVE NOW THE IMAGE OF OUR LATEST PREY.

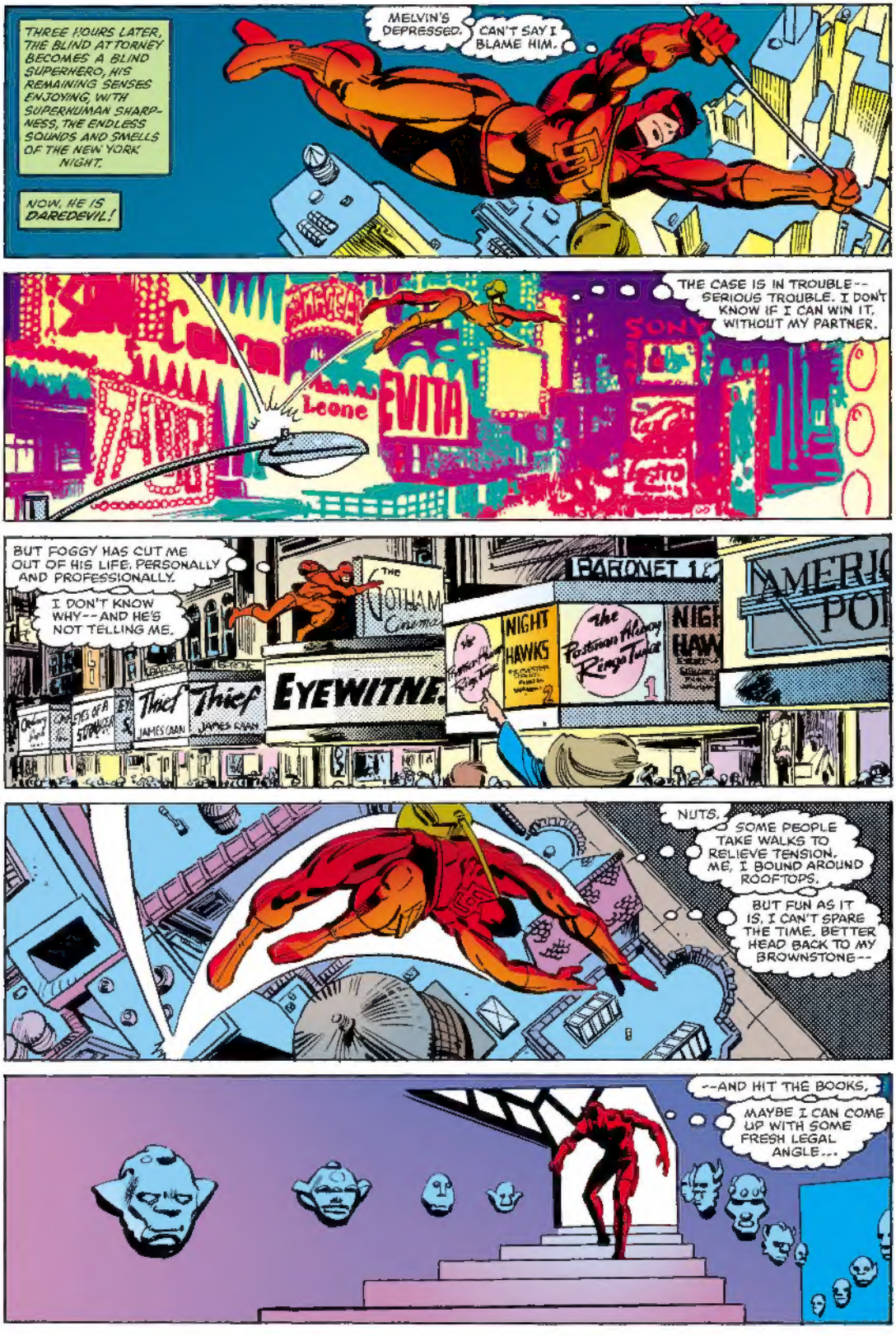
HE IS AN AMERICAN.
A LAWYER...

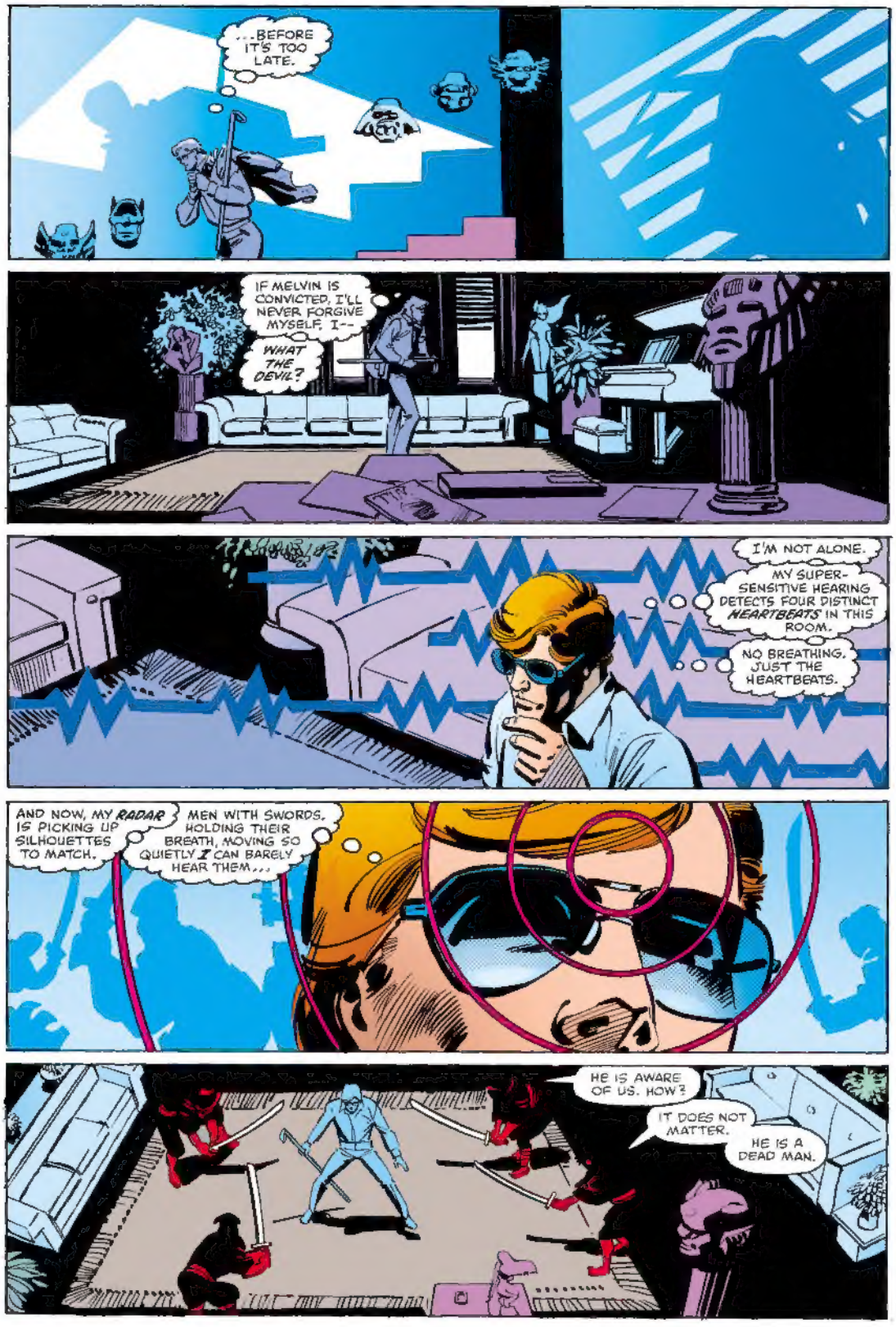

...NAMED MATTHEW MURDOCK.
HE AND HIS CLIENT, WHOSE IMAGE AWAITS US IN NEW YORK...
BOTH MUST DIE.
MATT!
IT IS MATT.
THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT. THE HAND HAS EXPANDED ITS OPERATION TO EUROPE AND AMERICA--
--AND HAVE BEEN HIRED TO SLAY THE ONLY MAN SHE HAS EVER LOVED.
HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN, SINCE HER FATHER'S DEATH DROVE HER FROM MATT--TO BECOME A MERCENARY, A BOUNTY HUNTER, AN ASSASSYN?
HOW MANY YEARS, SINCE HIS OWN FATHER'S DEATH INSPIRED MATT TO BECOME DAREDEVIL?
THEY ARE ENEMIES NOW.
SHE HATES HIM. SHE DOES.
AND SHE WILL NOT IMPERIL HER OWN LIFE, TO SAVE HIS.
SHE WILL NOT.
AND YET, SHE FINDS HERSELF ON THE NEXT FLIGHT TO NEW YORK.

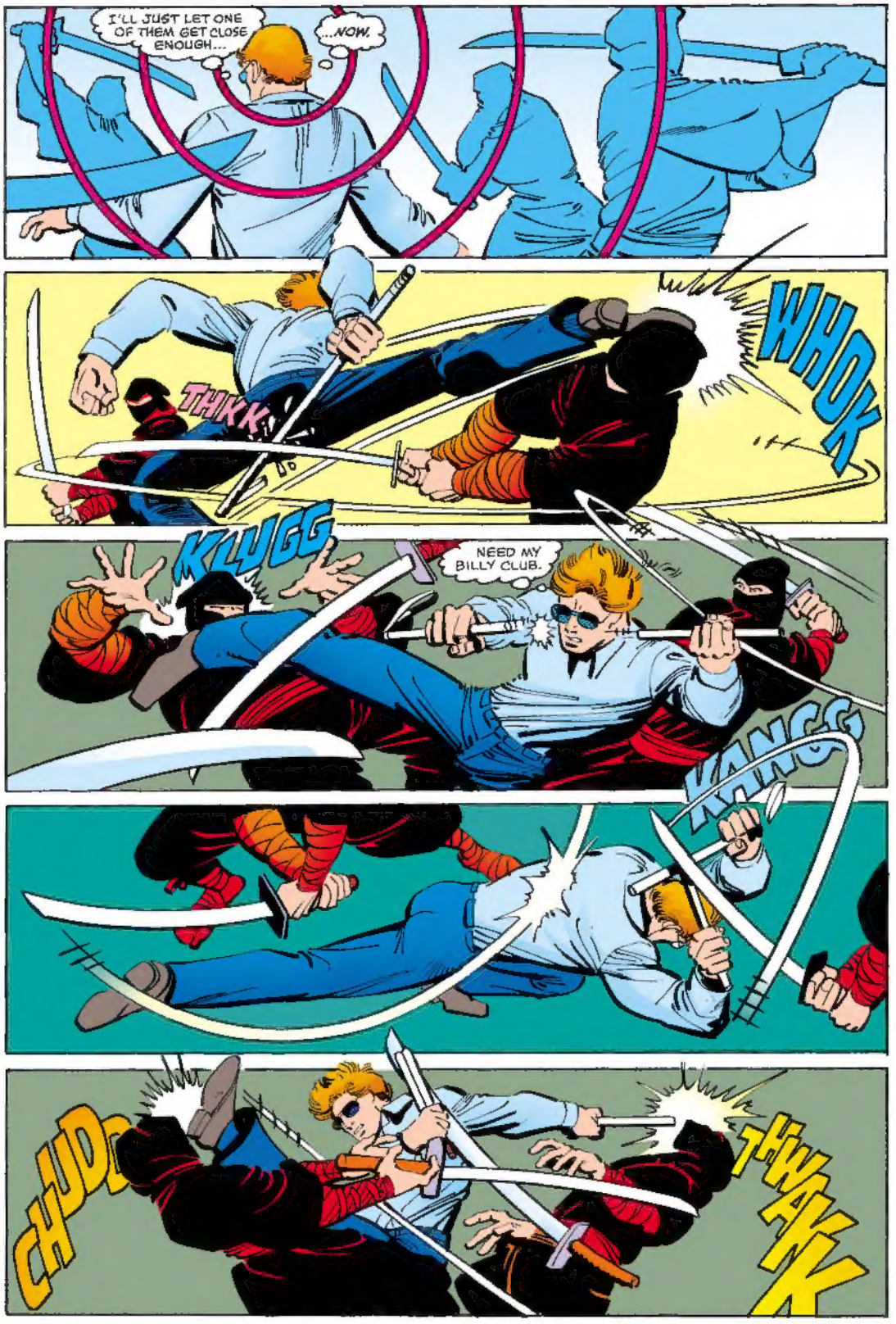
THE ASSASSINATION OF MATT MURDOCK

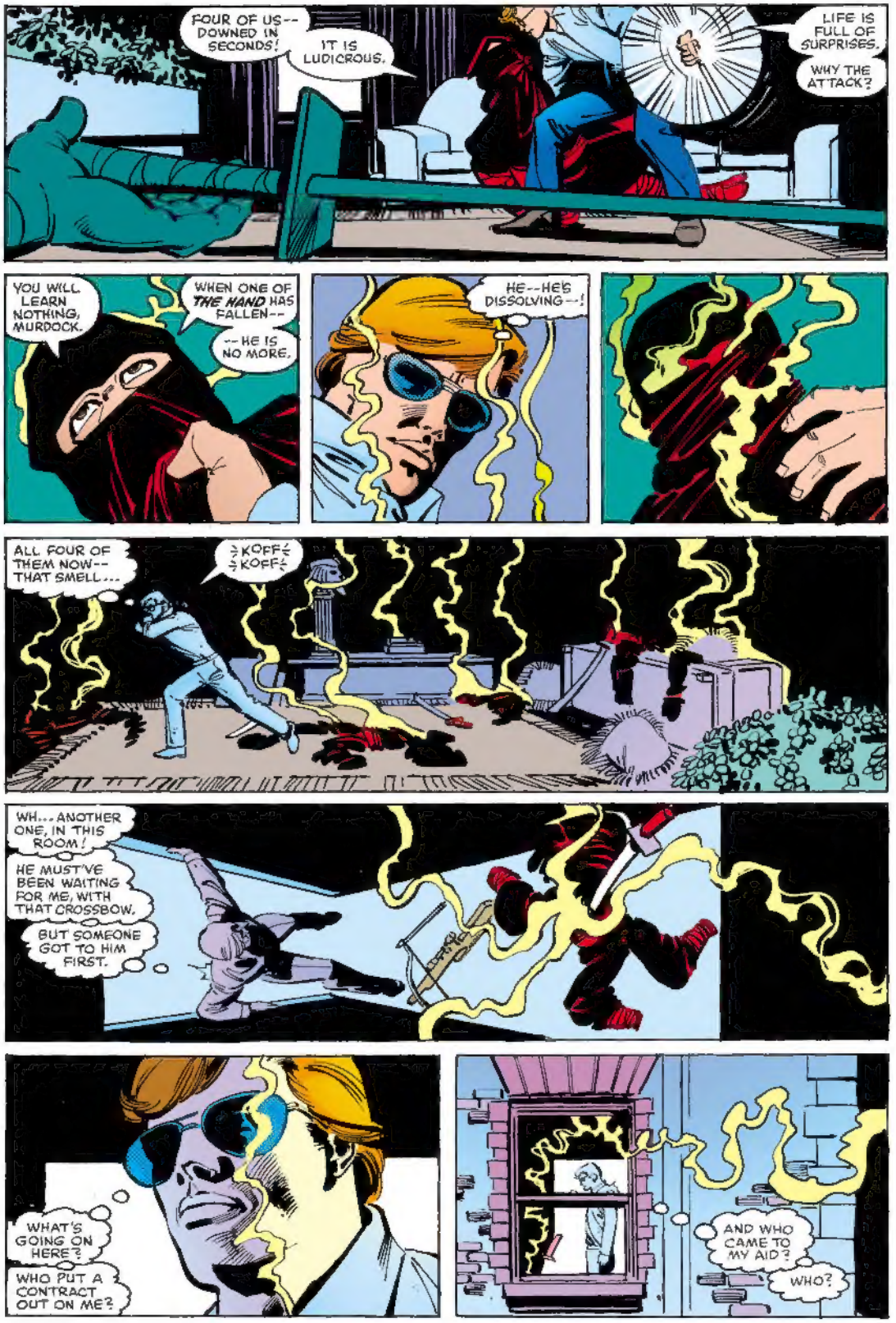
MILLER
STORY & ART
JANSON
FINISHED ART
WEIN AND JANSON
COLORS
ROSEN
LETTERS
O'NEIL
EDITOR
SHOOTER
ED.-IN-CHIEF

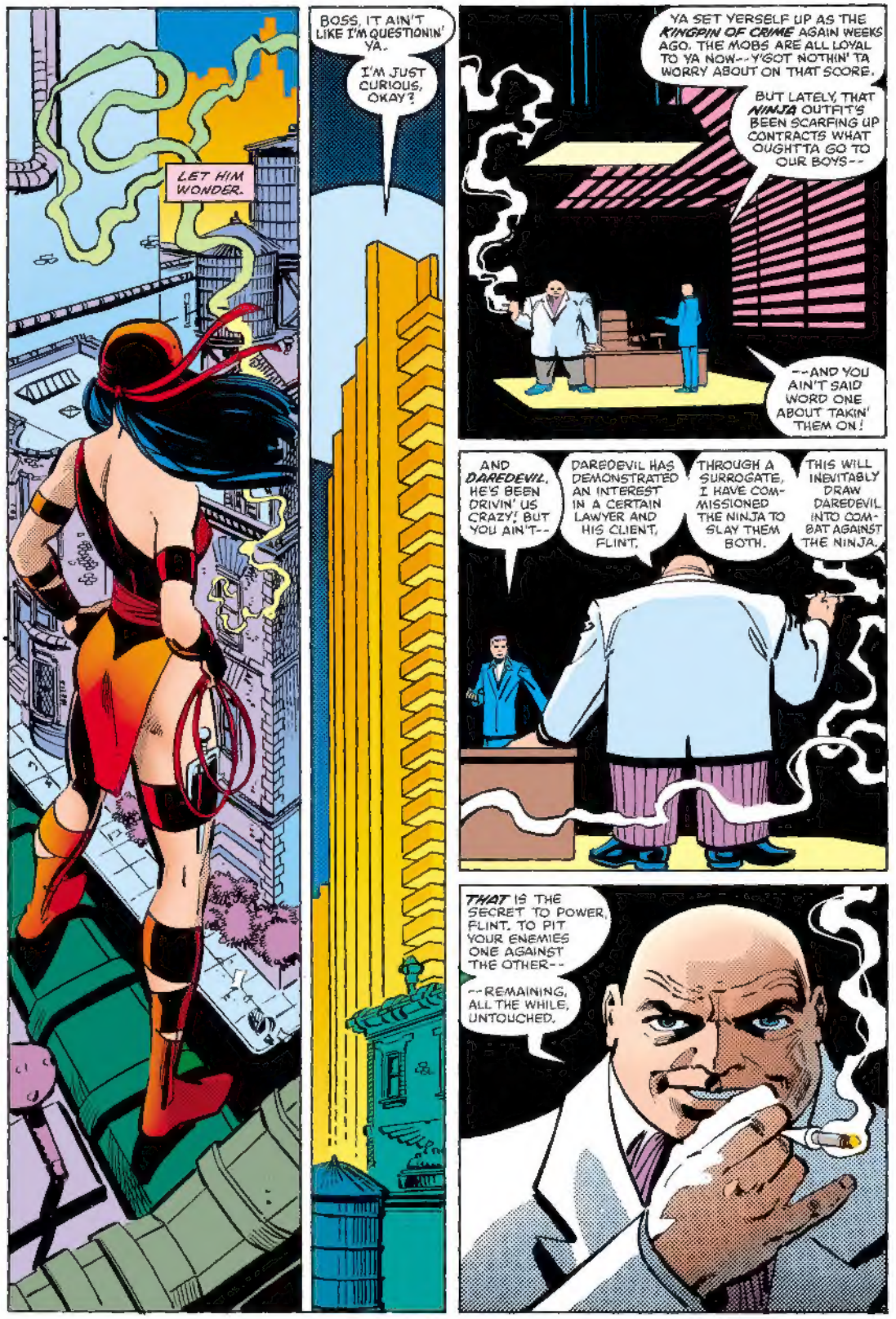

MELVIN POTTER IS INNOCENT!
HE HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE GLADIATOR--
--BUT THAT MONSTER NO LONGER DWELLS IN MELVIN'S MIND.
THE DEFENSE REQUESTS A DELAY IN THESE PROCEEDINGS, SO THAT WE MAY SECURE CERTAIN WITNESSES WHO WILL PROVE--
YOUR HONOR, THIS IS THE THIRD SUCH DELAY THAT MR. MURDOCK HAS REQUESTED.
SURELY, HE HAS EXHAUSTED THE PATIENCE OF THIS COURT.
HEY-- WHAT'S WITH MURDOCK?
THE PROSECUTION IS EATING HIM ALIVE!
YOU DON'T SEE HIS PARTNER UP THERE, DO YOU?
WORD IS THEY'RE KAPUT.
YER KIDDIN' ME, BEN. NELSON AND MURDOCK-- THE HOTTEST LEGAL TEAM IN THE COUNTRY-- ON THE OUTS?
THAT'S WHAT I HEAR.
SHHHH!
THE PROSECUTION IS READY TO PROCEED, YOUR HONOR.
SHALL WE?
INDEED WE SHALL.
THUMP
COURT WILL CONVENE AT TEN O'CLOCK TOMORROW MORNING.
MELVIN-- DON'T WORRY. WE'LL WIN THIS CASE.
YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME.
THAT'S WHAT YOU KEEP SAYIN', MURDOCK.

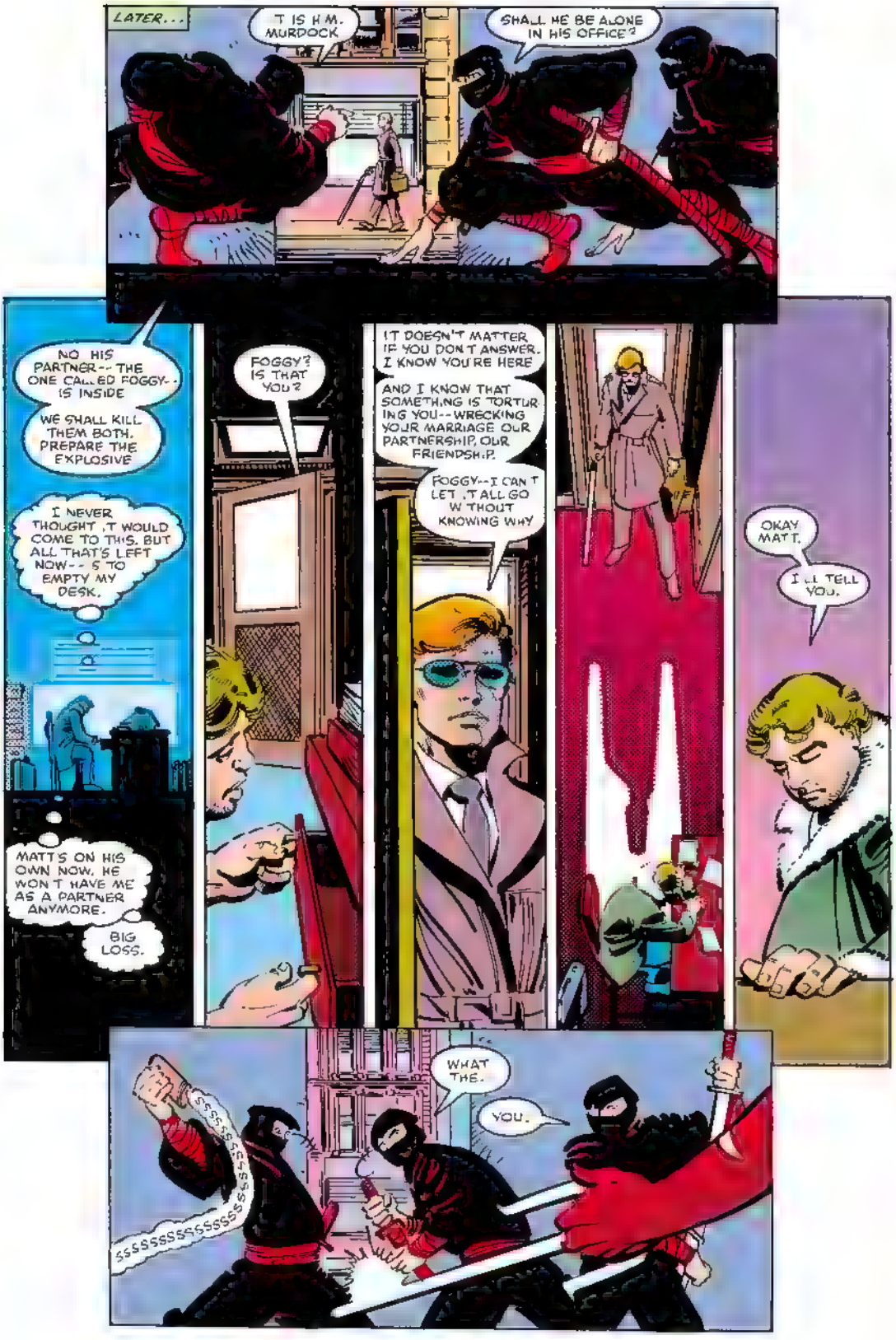

THREE HOURS LATER, THE BLIND ATTORNEY BECOMES A BLIND SUPERHERO, HIS REMAINING SENSES ENJOYING, WITH SUPERHUMAN SHARPNESS, THE ENDLESS SOUNDS AND SMELLS OF THE NEW YORK NIGHT.
NOW, HE IS DAREDEVIL!
MELVIN'S DEPRESSED.
CAN'T SAY I BLAME HIM.
THE CASE IS IN TROUBLE-- SERIOUS TROUBLE. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN WIN IT, WITHOUT MY PARTNER.
Leone
EVITA
SONY
BUT FOGGY HAS CUT ME OUT OF HIS LIFE, PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY.
I DON'T KNOW WHY--AND HE'S NOT TELLING ME.
THE
BARONET 1
NIGHT HAWKS
the Postman Always Rings Twice
Thief
JAMES CAAN
EYEWITNE
NUTS.
SOME PEOPLE TAKE WALKS TO RELIEVE TENSION. ME, I BOUND AROUND ROOFTOPS.
BUT FUN AS IT IS, I CAN'T SPARE THE TIME. BETTER HEAD BACK TO MY BROWNSTONE--
--AND HIT THE BOOKS.
MAYBE I CAN COME UP WITH SOME FRESH LEGAL ANGLE...

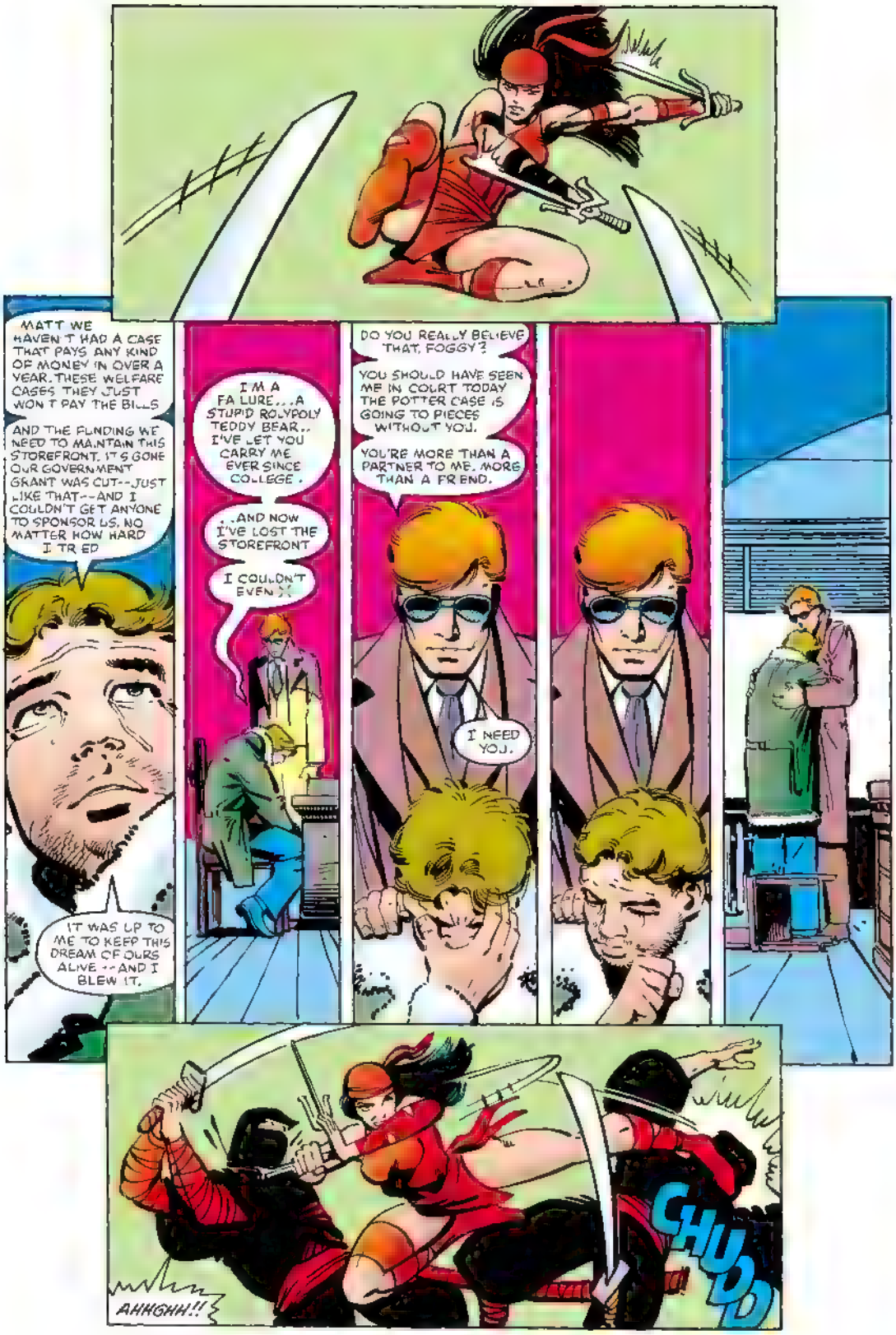

...BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
IF MELVIN IS CONVICTED, I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF, I--
WHAT THE DEVIL?
I'M NOT ALONE.
MY SUPER-SENSITIVE HEARING DETECTS FOUR DISTINCT HEARTBEATS IN THIS ROOM.
NO BREATHING. JUST THE HEARTBEATS.
AND NOW, MY RADAR IS PICKING UP SILHOUETTES TO MATCH.
MEN WITH SWORDS, HOLDING THEIR BREATH, MOVING SO QUIETLY I CAN BARELY HEAR THEM...
HE IS AWARE OF US. HOW?
IT DOES NOT MATTER.
HE IS A DEAD MAN.


I'LL JUST LET ONE OF THEM GET CLOSE ENOUGH...
...NOW.
THKK
WHOK
KLUGG
NEED MY BILLY CLUB.
KANGG
CHUD
THWAKK

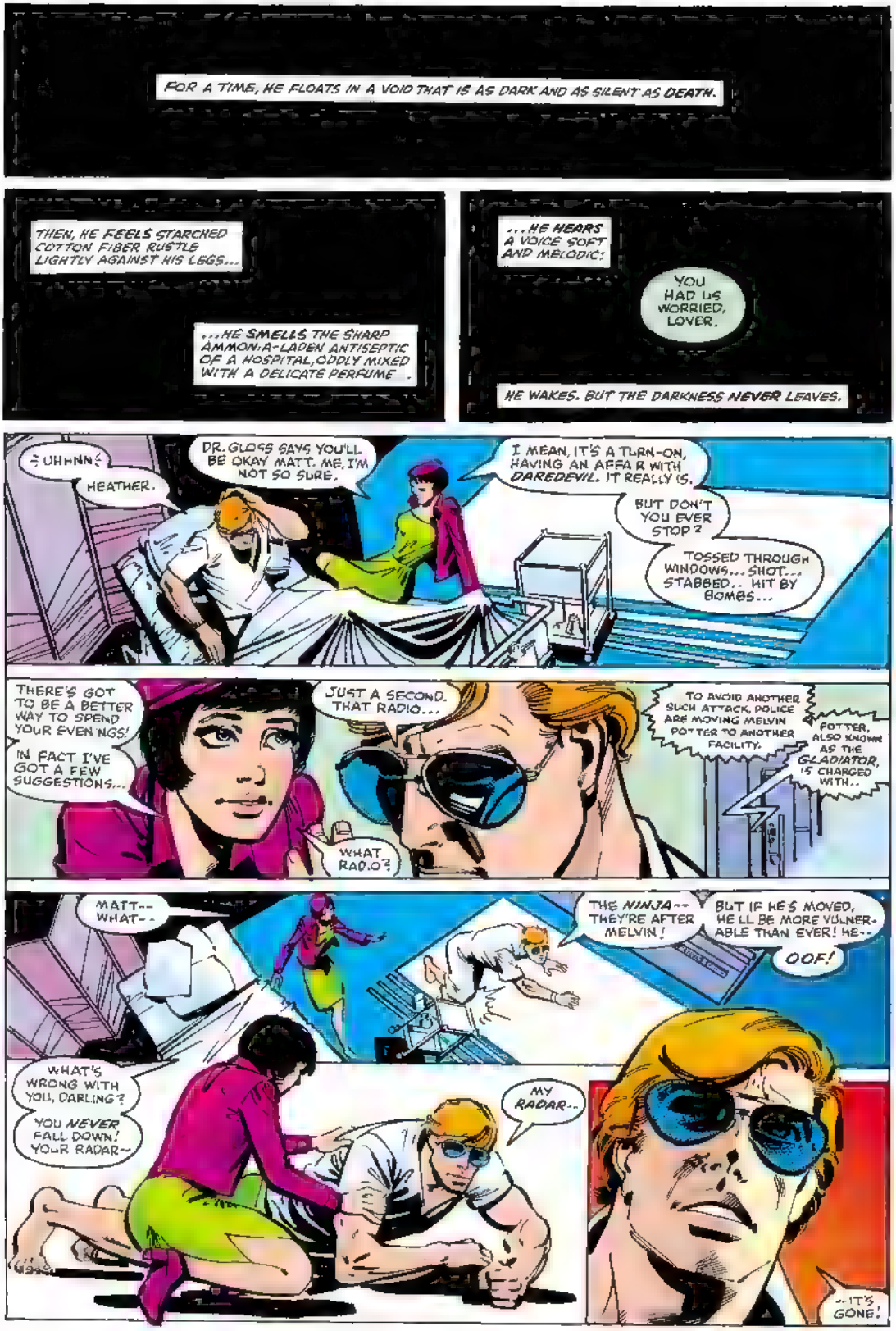

FOUR OF US--DOWNED IN SECONDS!
IT IS LUDICROUS.
LIFE IS FULL OF SURPRISES.
WHY THE ATTACK?
YOU WILL LEARN NOTHING, MURDOCK.
WHEN ONE OF THE HAND HAS FALLEN--
--HE IS NO MORE.
HE--HE'S DISSOLVING--!
ALL FOUR OF THEM NOW--THAT SMELL...
≑KOFF≑ ≑KOFF≑
WH... ANOTHER ONE, IN THIS ROOM!
HE MUST'VE BEEN WAITING FOR ME, WITH THAT CROSSBOW.
BUT SOMEONE GOT TO HIM FIRST.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
WHO PUT A CONTRACT OUT ON ME?
AND WHO CAME TO MY AID?
WHO?


LET HIM WONDER.
BOSS, IT AIN'T LIKE I'M QUESTIONIN' YA.
I'M JUST CURIOUS, OKAY?
YA SET YERSELF UP AS THE KINGPIN OF CRIME AGAIN WEEKS AGO. THE MOBS ARE ALL LOYAL TO YA NOW--Y'GOT NOTHIN' TA WORRY ABOUT ON THAT SCORE.
BUT LATELY, THAT NINJA OUTFIT'S BEEN SCARFING UP CONTRACTS WHAT OUGHTTA GO TO OUR BOYS--
--AND YOU AIN'T SAID WORD ONE ABOUT TAKIN' THEM ON!
AND DAREDEVIL, HE'S BEEN DRIVIN' US CRAZY! BUT YOU AIN'T--
DAREDEVIL HAS DEMONSTRATED AN INTEREST IN A CERTAIN LAWYER AND HIS CLIENT, FLINT.
THROUGH A SURROGATE, I HAVE COMMISSIONED THE NINJA TO SLAY THEM BOTH.
THIS WILL INEVITABLY DRAW DAREDEVIL INTO COMBAT AGAINST THE NINJA.
THAT IS THE SECRET TO POWER, FLINT. TO PIT YOUR ENEMIES ONE AGAINST THE OTHER--
--REMAINING, ALL THE WHILE, UNTOUCHED.

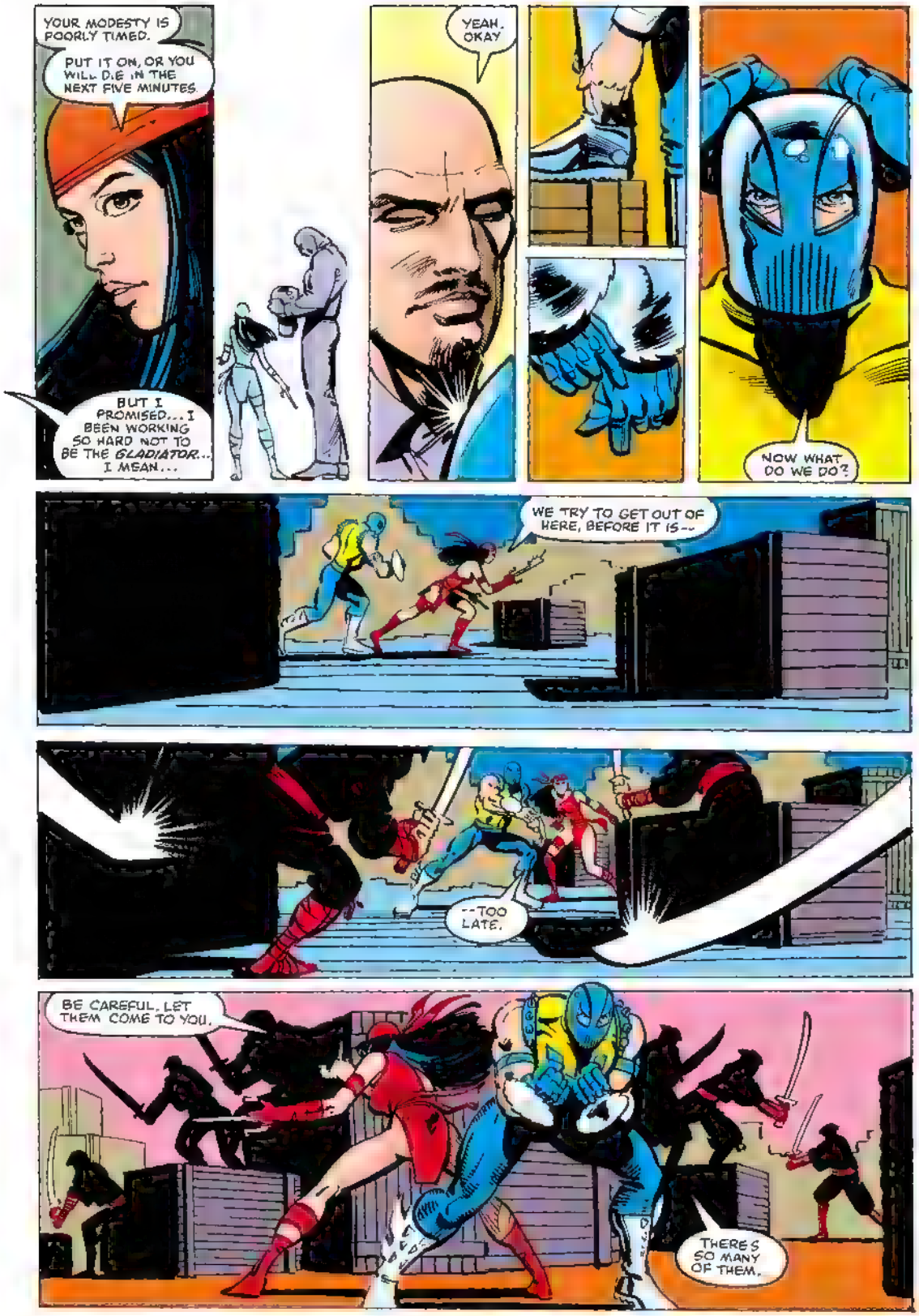

LATER...
T IS H.M. MURDOCK.
SHALL HE BE ALONE IN HIS OFFICE?
NO. HIS PARTNER-- THE ONE CALLED FOGGY-- IS INSIDE
WE SHALL KILL THEM BOTH. PREPARE THE EXPLOSIVE
I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD COME TO THIS. BUT ALL THAT'S LEFT NOW-- IS TO EMPTY MY DESK.
MATT'S ON HIS OWN NOW. HE WON'T HAVE ME AS A PARTNER ANYMORE.
BIG LOSS.
FOGGY? IS THAT YOU?
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU DON'T ANSWER. I KNOW YOU'RE HERE
AND I KNOW THAT SOMETHING IS TORTURING YOU--WRECKING YOUR MARRIAGE OUR PARTNERSHIP, OUR FRIENDSHIP.
FOGGY--I CAN'T LET IT ALL GO WITHOUT KNOWING WHY
OKAY MATT.
I'LL TELL YOU.
WHAT THE.
YOU.
SSSS


MATT WE HAVEN'T HAD A CASE THAT PAYS ANY KIND OF MONEY IN OVER A YEAR. THESE WELFARE CASES THEY JUST WON'T PAY THE BILLS
AND THE FUNDING WE NEED TO MAINTAIN THIS STOREFRONT. IT'S GONE OUR GOVERNMENT GRANT WAS CUT--JUST LIKE THAT--AND I COULDN'T GET ANYONE TO SPONSOR US. NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED
IT WAS UP TO ME TO KEEP THIS DREAM OF OURS ALIVE--AND I BLEW IT.
I'M A FAILURE...A STUPID ROLYPOLY TEDDY BEAR.. I'VE LET YOU CARRY ME EVER SINCE COLLEGE.
...AND NOW I'VE LOST THE STOREFRONT
I COULDN'T EVEN--
DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT, FOGGY?
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME IN COURT TODAY THE POTTER CASE IS GOING TO PIECES WITHOUT YOU.
YOU'RE MORE THAN A PARTNER TO ME. MORE THAN A FRIEND.
I NEED YOU.
AHHGHH!!
CHUDD

NO!
NO..
SSSSSSSS
SSSSSSS

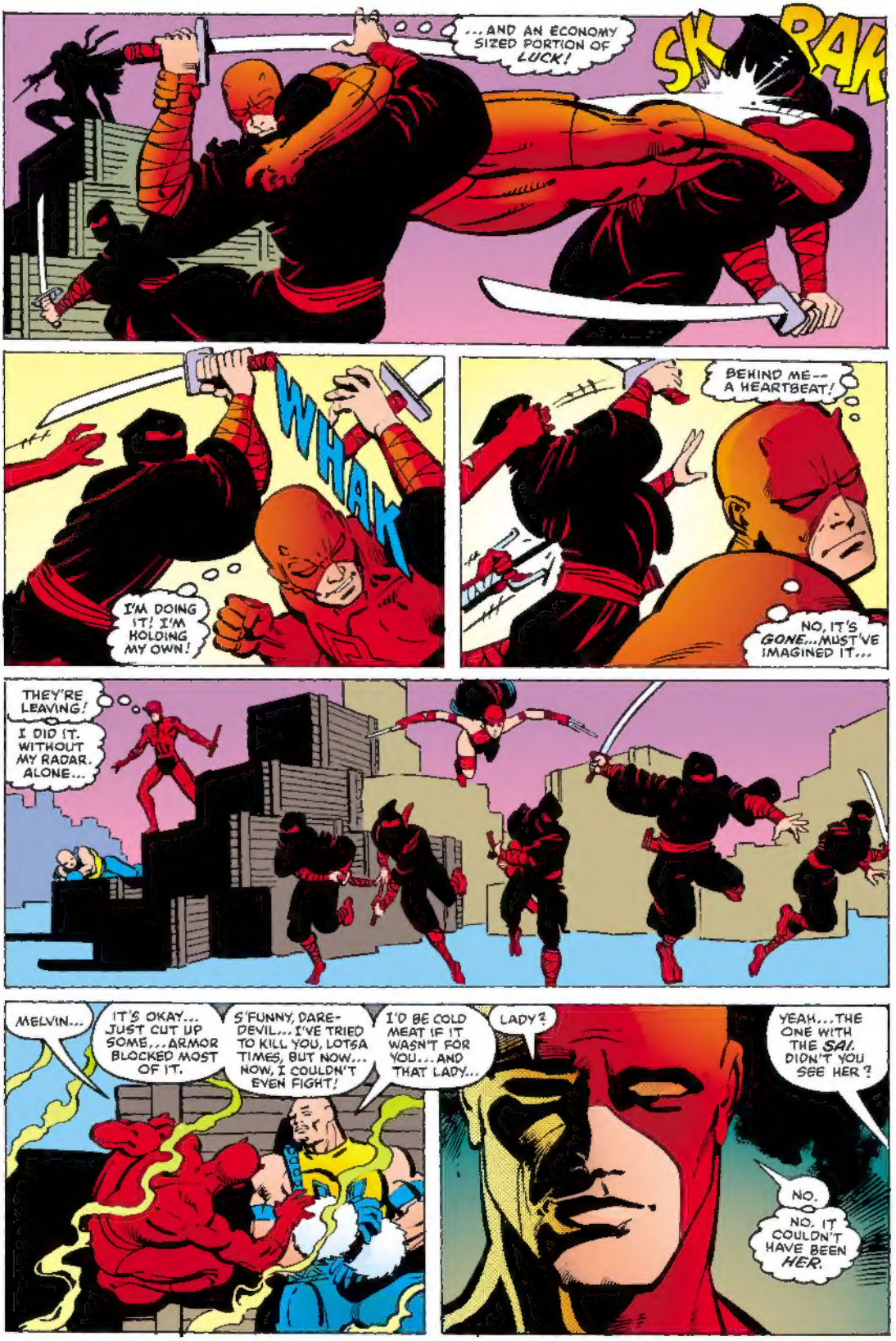

FOR A TIME, HE FLOATS IN A VOID THAT IS AS DARK AND AS SILENT AS DEATH.
THEN, HE FEELS STARCHED COTTON FIBER RUSTLE LIGHTLY AGAINST HIS LEGS...
...HE SMELLS THE SHARP AMMONIA-LADEN ANTISEPTIC OF A HOSPITAL, ODDLY MIXED WITH A DELICATE PERFUME.
...HE HEARS A VOICE SOFT AND MELODIC:
YOU HAD US WORRIED, LOVER.
HE WAKES. BUT THE DARKNESS NEVER LEAVES.
:UHHNN:
HEATHER.
DR. GLOSS SAYS YOU'LL BE OKAY MATT. ME, I'M NOT SO SURE.
I MEAN, IT'S A TURN-ON, HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH DAREDEVIL. IT REALLY IS.
BUT DON'T YOU EVER STOP?
TOSSED THROUGH WINDOWS... SHOT... STABBED.. HIT BY BOMBS...
THERE'S GOT TO BE A BETTER WAY TO SPEND YOUR EVENINGS!
IN FACT I'VE GOT A FEW SUGGESTIONS...
JUST A SECOND. THAT RADIO...
WHAT RADIO?
TO AVOID ANOTHER SUCH ATTACK, POLICE ARE MOVING MELVIN POTTER TO ANOTHER FACILITY.
POTTER, ALSO KNOWN AS THE GLADIATOR, IS CHARGED WITH..
MATT-- WHAT--
THE NINJA-- THEY'RE AFTER MELVIN!
BUT IF HE'S MOVED, HE'LL BE MORE VULNERABLE THAN EVER! HE--
OOF!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, DARLING?
YOU NEVER FALL DOWN! YOUR RADAR--
MY RADAR--
--IT'S GONE!

MEANWHILE...
THAT POTTER GUY OUGHTTA BE GRATEFUL. HE'S IN THE BACK OF THE TRUCK--
--SO HE CAN'T SMELL YOUR STINKIN CIGAR!
SHADDUP. I GOT RIGHTS.
BES DES, I GOT THE WINDOW OPEN, DON'T I?
HEY!
FFFF


YOUR MODESTY IS POORLY TIMED.
PUT IT ON, OR YOU WILL DIE IN THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES.
BUT I PROMISED... I BEEN WORKING SO HARD NOT TO BE THE GLADIATOR... I MEAN...
YEAH. OKAY
NOW WHAT DO WE DO?
WE TRY TO GET OUT OF HERE, BEFORE IT IS--
--TOO LATE.
BE CAREFUL. LET THEM COME TO YOU.
THERE'S SO MANY OF THEM.

OUTSIDE...
PADDED FOOTSTEPS, DOZENS OF THEM. THEY MUST BE SWARMING THE PLACE!
I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME, WITHOUT MY RADAR, I HAVEN'T MUCH OF A CHANCE AGAINST THAT MANY OF THEM.
BUT MELVIN DOESN'T HAVE ANY CHANCE, WITHOUT MY HELP
HE'S FINALLY PURGED HIMSELF OF THE GLAD ATOR--FINALLY DESTROYED HIS KILLER INSTINCTS--
--JUST WHEN HE NEEDS THEM MOST!
COVER MY BACK POTTER. I CANNOT DEFEAT THEM ALONE.
POTTER?
KTANG
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?
FIGHT BACK!
SKRAK
KUNNG
KTANNG
I- I CAN'T!
CHOK
I'VE LOST IT! I--
AARRGHH!!
SHKRK
AS YOU SAID, WOMAN, YOU CANNOT DEFEAT US ALONE.
EH? THOSE CRATES--

THERE'S A WOMAN DOWN THERE! DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO HEAR HER VOICE, SO I'VE NO IDEA WHO SHE IS.
TERRIFIC. NOW I'VE GOT *TWO* PEOPLE TO SAVE!
SKRUNCH
WHOK
IT'LL TAKE TOTAL CONCENTRATION-- TO JUDGE WHERE THEY ARE BY THEIR HEART-BEATS--
--TO GUESS THE ANGLE OF THEIR SWORDTHRUSTS BY THE SLIGHTEST DISLOCATION OF THE AIR.
BEHIND ME--!
KRAK
JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS, BEFORE MY RADAR FULLY DEVELOPED...
RELYING ON MY SENSES... MY FANCY FOOTWORK...


...AND AN ECONOMY SIZED PORTION OF LUCK!
SK
RAK
WHAK
I'M DOING IT! I'M HOLDING MY OWN!
BEHIND ME--A HEARTBEAT!
NO, IT'S GONE...MUST'VE IMAGINED IT...
THEY'RE LEAVING!
I DID IT. WITHOUT MY RADAR. ALONE...
MELVIN...
IT'S OKAY... JUST CUT UP SOME... ARMOR BLOCKED MOST OF IT.
S'FUNNY, DAREDEVIL... I'VE TRIED TO KILL YOU, LOTSA TIMES, BUT NOW... NOW, I COULDN'T EVEN FIGHT!
I'D BE COLD MEAT IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU... AND THAT LADY...
LADY?
YEAH... THE ONE WITH THE SAI. DIDN'T YOU SEE HER?
NO.
NO. IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN HER.

LATER...
IT WAS SHE.
THIS CONTRACT HAS BROUGHT US TO BATTLE WITH ELEKTRA.
SHE, AND THE ONE CALLED DAREDEVIL, DISPATCHED OUR FORCE. ONLY WE THREE SURVIVED.
SURVIVED, YES.
BUT YOU FAILED.
YOU SHOULD HAVE DIED, WITH YOUR BROTHERS.
BUT-- BUT JONIN, WE THOUGHT-- IF WE TOLD YOU OF ELEKTRA...
YOU ARE NOT PAID TO THINK. ONLY TO KILL--
--OR BE KILLED.
NOT-- NOT HIM!
WE-- WE ARE BUT THREE --AND HE--
SILENCE, BROTHERS.
WE MUST DEFEND OURSELVES.
DID YOU SAY, "DEFEND YOURSELVES?"
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

WHAAJSAKK
REMARKABLE.
THREE OF US...
...WITH BUT A SINGLE STROKE--!
AS ALWAYS, YOU DID NOT FAIL ME, MY FRIEND.
CONSIDER THAT BUT A SMALL APPETIZER... A PRELUDE... TO YOUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT.
RECEIVE NOW THE IMAGE...
...OF THE WOMAN ELEKTRA.
NEXT ISSUE: GANTLET